

National Civil Services Reform League

Gilman Correspondence

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NATIONAL CIVIL SERVICE REFORM LEAGUE,

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Offices, 54 WILLIAM STREET.

(Telephone 1388 John.)

DANIEL COIT GILMAN, President.

CHARLES J. BONAPARTE, Chairman of the Council.

GEORGE McANENY, Secretary.

A. S. FRISSELL, Treasurer.

ELLIOT H. GOODWIN, Asst. Secy.

Duplicate.

New York, Sept. 10, 1901.

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Hon. D. C. Gilman,
614 Park Avenue,
Baltimore, Md.

My dear Mr. Gilman:

As you are aware, the assistant secretaryship of the League has been vacant since Mr. Goodwin resigned that office at the end of June. It has hardly been necessary to have a second man during the summer months, but we shall probably need some one following the 1st of October. Mr. Bonaparte has suggested that you might have in mind the names of one or more eligible young men who might be considered - particularly those with whose work at the University or elsewhere you have been personally familiar. Mr. Goodwin was paid a salary of \$1,800 a year, though it would probably be our plan to pay his successor at the rate of \$1,500 for at least a probationary period of three months. You know, of course, what is the general character of the work. If a man can be secured who has had some experience in journalistic work, or who is accustomed in some measure to public speaking, such a man would probably be the best. These qualifications, however, are not essential. If you can give me any suggestion, to be submitted in turn to the Council at its October meeting, I shall be grateful to you. Meanwhile, believe me,

Faithfully yours,

George McAneny

Secretary.

P.S. Not being certain of our plans for the rest of the month. I am sending this in duplicate.

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New York, August 29, 1901. 190

Hon. D. C. Gilman,
North East Harbor,
Me.

Dear Sir:

It has been customary for the Council to meet in New York during the first or second week of October, and at that time to fix the time and place of the annual meeting of the League. The annual meeting is held usually at the end of the second week of December, and it has not been proposed that any change should be made in this arrangement the present year. It has, however, been suggested that it might be better for members to discuss informally in advance of the Council meeting, and through correspondence with the Secretary, the place for the annual session, as well as the general nature and possibly the details of the programme.

The impression seems to be general that it would be better to meet the present year in one of the larger eastern cities, where it will be practicable to secure a numerous and representative attendance. The only set invitation as yet received comes from the Mayor and certain municipal reform bodies of Milwaukee. It is not believed, however, that it would be wise the present year to venture a meeting so far in the West. Among the available eastern cities there are Boston, Buffalo, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington. In each of these there is a strong local organization. New York might possibly be thought non-available for the reason that the meeting of last year was held in that city.

The New York Association, however, would probably be able to arrange for another meeting there, if desirable. It is likely, for that matter, that any one of the Associations named would be glad to undertake the necessary arrangements, if the Council decides that the meeting had best be held in its city. It has been suggested, further, that if the election of a city were made in this way, the present would be an opportune time to put in force the plan that has been discussed in the past, of permitting all of those who attend the customary banquet, or other entertainment at the close of the session - including delegates, -to purchase their own tickets, so that the expense falling upon the local body would be materially lessened.

The programme of the meeting will include the annual address of the president, the reading of a limited number of set papers on selected topics, the presentation and discussion of the final report of the Investigating Committee, the submission of brief reports from localities, and of reports from such committees as are charged with the consideration of special subjects. The Secretary will be glad to have from members, as early as may be convenient, a statement of their views regarding the selection of the meeting place, and any suggestions that may occur to them as to the form or ^{details} details of the programme. These replies, and such further correspondence with individual members as may follow, will be submitted to the Council at its coming meeting, and will no doubt be of much value in guiding its action.

I am,

Very sincerely yours,

Leo Hilary
Secretary.

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New York, July 29, 1901. 190

Hon. Daniel Coit Gilman,
"Over Edge",
Northeast Harbor, Me.

My dear Mr. Gilman:

I have duly received your note of the 25th inst., from Northeast Harbor. I am convinced, as the result of my canvassing among members of the Council, that it would be very difficult to get together a quorum for a meeting either here or elsewhere in August or September - that we shall hardly be able, in short, to get together before the usual Fall meeting date, which has been in New York, early in October. I ~~shall~~ be very glad to submit your suggestion as to Niagara Falls, but, as I have intimated, I fear that there would be the same conflict of traveling plans that I find would apply to Lake George late in August. The members seem likely to be very much scattered throughout the course of both months, and a number of those who have planned to attend the Buffalo Exposition have already been there.

Mr. Bonaparte suggests that even though we cannot arrange a meeting, we ought to begin to think at once of the place and programme for the coming annual session, and that an interchange of views among ourselves on these subjects might be very useful before any formal action is taken. He urges that we should first of all choose a place where we can be assured of a good attendance of delegates, and that this is possible only in one of the large eastern cities. A meeting for missionary purposes in some southern or

western city, say at New Orleans or Milwaukee, he believes would be better later on, and adds that just now a noticeably unsuccessful meeting would be a serious matter for the cause, and that no chances should be taken. I think that this is sound reasoning, and moreover, that the most advantageous place in the east would this time be Boston. I will write to our friends there at once, and see how they feel about it.

I have read with interest the note you sent me clipped evidently from one of the London papers, with reference to Sir John Lubbock's plan for instituting competitive examinations for private commercial clerkships. I had heard nothing of this, and do not know exactly how it is expected that the plan would be worked out. I am sending a letter of enquiry on the subject to London.

Charles Nordhoff was not a member of the Civil Service Reform Association, although I have no doubt that during the period of his connection with the "Post" and the "Nation" he did more or less hard work for the cause. I could not be sure of this without writing to Godkin or Garrison. I will do that to-day.

With sincere regards to you, as ever,

Faithfully yours,

George Quincy

Bolton Landing,
Lake George, N.Y.

Secretary.

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CHARLES J. BONAPARTE, Chairman of the Council.

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ELLIOT H. GOODWIN, Asst. Secy.

New York, July 23, 1901. 190

Hon. D. C. Gilman,
"Over Edge",
Northeast Harbor, Me.

Dear Mr. Gilman:

I have your letter of the 17th inst., and though I am sorry to know that we shall not have the benefit of the original investigation you had proposed to make in England, I am glad that you are yourself to have an unbroken summer of rest in Maine, after the busy period attending the closing up of your work at the University.

The work of the Investigating Committee is going on at a very satisfactory rate. The latest published report - that on the abuses in connection with the appointment of subordinates of the House of Representatives, attracted a great deal of attention, and I think will do good. As the Washington "Star" says editorially:

"Just at this season of the year, when news is dull and themes for discussion are few and unimportant, such statements as those of the League's committee are certain to be exploited very widely and freely. There has already been a gratifying display of wholesome indignation on the part of the press of the country, and perhaps the seeds of the reform have been sown broadcast".

You will receive within two or three days, copy of the next report in the series, that on appointments made in important classes of positions without examination, under arbitrary constructions placed by appointing officers on the language of appropriation acts or other special legislation. This is intended for publication on Monday next, the 29th inst. On the Monday following we shall follow

with a report on violations of the law in the assessment and coercion, for political purposes, of employees of the Jersey City post-office.

It was stated in the Washington letter of the "Evening Post" a short time ago, that Director Merriam had given up a series of articles on the Census that he had planned, and it may be that one of these was the proposed paper for the "North American Review". The explanation was that he does not think it ^{an} altogether dignified thing for officers in important executive positions, to write for publication about their own work, and I am not sure but what there is something in that. The thing is at least overdone, and very frequently a man is accepted not because of the merit of his work, but because his official position lends something of the spectacular to what he has to say. Whether Merriam's article appears or not, I think the Committee will put out the report on the Census in the early Fall. Merriam's argument in favor of his system, based on a supposed greater freedom in getting rid of inefficient men, is not exactly borne out by his own practice. When he had occasion, recently, to reduce the clerical force by one-sixth, he notified members of Congress that one man must be dropped from among those nominated by each, and asked them to name that man. The probability is that the men named were those who had the least claim upon Congressmen, and not those who had displayed the least efficiency - a side of the subject with which Congressmen themselves are not supposed to be familiar. The whole matter of removals ^{however,} must be considered by the League before very long. Personally, I am very much in favor of the existing rule, which, as you no doubt

know, was adopted by the President to meet our own suggestions. Inasmuch as the rule requires nothing more than the filing of a statement of reasons, and of a reply thereto in writing, requiring no trial or formal proceeding of any sort, and without the right of appeal beyond the head of the department, whose decision is final, and absolutely without the right of invoking the interference of the Courts, I have not been able to see why the power to remove for reasons sufficient to the superior officer should be seriously hampered, or discipline in any measure impaired. There will, of course, be occasions now and then when an ultra-conscientious officer who cannot specify exactly the reasons for his action, will hesitate before removing a clerk who has proved merely to be generally inefficient, and who has not been guilty of specific failures or offences; but it seems to me that the number of cases where this embarrassment will occur must be very few, compared with the number in which, through the operation of the President's rule, removals for frivolous or unjust reasons are prevented; in short, that the benefit to good administration derived from the rule far outweighs any possible loss.

The annual meeting of the League will be held, no doubt, about the middle of December. Usually the Thursday and Friday of the second week are selected. The place has not yet been selected. Personally I am hopeful that it will be Boston, where there has been quite a revival of activity within the past year, and where we have not been for eleven years. We have also an invitation from Milwaukee, but that is a pretty long journey, and I doubt very much whether we could have a properly representative meeting there. We

shall have a meeting of the Council in early October, at which the decision will be made. I have hoped, too, that we may possibly get the Council together - or a quorum of it - here at Lake George late in August. In that case we might fix the plans for the annual session earlier. We had a meeting here a year ago, that was very pleasant. This year we should be able to take all who come, as our guests, that is, at our own house, and that of Mr. Schurz which is opposite. Do you think that it would be practicable for you to attend yourself, if such a meeting is arranged for, say, the third or fourth week in August? Meanwhile, if I can help you in any way in furnishing such data as you will need for reference in preparing your address, I hope you will call on me.

Faithfully yours,

Genevieve

Bolton Landing,
Lake George, N.Y.

Secretary.